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TelCon
Bob McNamara/Mr. Kissinger
5:45, Jan. 3, 1973

K: Hello.

McN: Henry, it's Bob. Happy New Year.

K: Happy New Year to you too.

McN: I'm leaving for Africa in a few days before you return to Paris or about when you do, and before I leave, Henry, I just wanted to call you and say "don't worry about what's happening".

K: You're a good guy.

McN: I really do. Christ this is a time of trouble for you, I know that, and I am reminded of a remark you made to me about four years ago when you were beginning on this. I had been a year out of it, and I think you said that you thought that everyone that came close to Vietnam was in danger of being destroyed. Well, it isn't that bad, Henry, it surely isn't going to be that way for you, and you are going to go down in hi story as the man who finally got us out of there. You will come through it all right.

K: Bob, I really appreciate that.

McN: I really mean this Henry. I was in Aston last week skiing and we had a perfect glorious time, but during the time three or four people called me about the bombing and all this stuff and I get back into town and I read all this--I had my secretary clip all the columns while I was gone--and I read all that stuff and I hear all these rumors, I heard it before I left and I hear it now Henry, and I know just exactly what must be on our mind and what's going on in that building over there. Just let it get you down, that's all. All this crap about the task being loose and ambiguous--look, Henry, you know and I know there is only one way to resolve this and that's to have a conscious ambiguity in the damn thing.

K: Exactly.

McN: And don't give up on that, that's the way to handle it.

K: No, no. And you know it's--a lot of this is put out by jealous bureaucrats.

McN: I know it, I can tell you--I don't have to tell you, you know where it's coming from as well as I do, it's coming from two different

buildings in this city and both of them are pretty damn close at hand, but anyhow, what you're doing is the right thing, Henry, and if it weren't for you I'd be deeply pessimistic about getting out of there.

K: I appreciate that very much.

McN: And I think, Henry, this is not just my view, I should say all also it's the view of some others of you friends and well McBundy for example and a lot of others that I know, so don't feel that everything's dark and bad. There is a time of trouble that's perfectly clear but--

K: That means a lot to me.

McN: Not everybody is as critical as some of these damn columnists and others.

K: Well, I hope when you get back we'll have made a breakthrough.

McN: Okay, good luck to you, Henry.

K: Thank you, bye.

McN: Bye, bye.